

EXHIBIT 10
DATE 3/27/07
SB 481



To: House Judiciary
From: WEEL – Olivia Riutta – oriutta@weelempowers.org, 406.495.0497.
Date: March 27, 2007
Re: SB 481 – Informed Consent to Marry

Madame Chairwoman and Members of the Committee,

I am here as a representative of WEEL. We are a statewide non-profit made up of low-income Montana families. Today, I stand in support of SB 481 because marriage is a serious contract with rights and responsibilities that are not inherently known.

At WEEL we provide direct advocacy for low-income Montanans and a lot of the folks who come through our door are single mothers, divorced, and the economic implications of marriage have had a direct effect on them and their children. Even years after the dissolution of marriage they continue to experience the economic consequence of marriage through the collection of child support and the details of parenting plans.

In preparation for this bill I sat down and realized that I don't know what the contract of marriage legally entails. I also thought about all the other legal contracts that I am in.

Just recently I renewed my cell phone contract. I was taken aback by the giant envelope I got in the mail, full of information about the contract I have entered into. It outlined everything including: my rights to refuse or cancel the agreement, termination fees, \$175/phone line, my rights to make changes, and my rights to dispute resolution and mandatory arbitration.

I certainly don't want to equate the contract of marriage to a cell phone contract, but how am I getting so much information for something as irrelevant and silly as a cell phone contract.

At WEEL we believe in giving people information and tools to make informed decisions. I've seen what a lack of understanding about the rights and responsibilities of marriage can do to children and families.

This is a bill about giving people information.

I urge a due pass on SB 481.

Thank you,

Olivia Riutta